



July 2003

## KEY CITYWIDE COMMUNITY SERVICES RESTORED IN BUDGET

### COUNCILMEMBER ATKINS TAKES LEAD IN SHAPING BUDGET PROPOSAL

During the recent budget hearings, I fought hard to help protect key citywide community services which were originally scheduled to be cut. Working closely with my colleagues throughout the budget hearings at Council, I was able to craft a budget memo which was incorporated in full in the final budget proposal presented by the Mayor to the Council.

This proposal, which was passed unanimously, avoids short-changing the residents of District Three by keeping Sunday hours for at least one branch library, and by restoring recreation center hours and seasonal pool operations which are clearly important to the community. Critical citywide services such as restroom cleaning and litter removal at our beaches and in Mission Bay were also restored. These were all top priorities for residents from all districts.

Vital services were also restored in Balboa Park, including hours at the Balboa Park Activity Center, Morley Field and the Municipal Gymnasium. Additionally, the Council voted to approve the repair of aging and deteriorating sewer laterals in the park, and restore the Balboa Park Tram hours, ensuring that mobility inside the park remains consistent, especially during the summer months.

I also worked successfully to add the restoration of hours at all Community Service Centers citywide. I continue to hear from constituents how important the service centers are to neighborhoods throughout the city, so it was especially gratifying to restore these crucial hours.

While the budget which we passed still contained some cuts that were hard to swallow, the final product made significant strides toward meeting our city's most important needs while acknowledging our fiscal challenges.

Prior to the passage of the budget, I was also able to work with City Manager Mike Uberuaga to locate funds to keep the city's successful 6 to 6 after-school program free for all current participants (*see related story on page 2*). It was originally proposed that a \$90 fee be instituted for all students whose families don't qualify for the city's free or reduced-price lunch program. I felt that it was important that we continue to provide this vital service free of charge to all families, and that no child currently in the program would be forced to withdraw due to financial considerations.

The budget which we passed is ultimately contingent upon the state balancing its budget without the need for additional revenue from cities. There has been some discussion at the state level that an additional \$1 billion will be needed from local governments to help the state to balance its budget. If enacted, San Diego's share of this amount would be \$20 million.

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## COUNCILMEMBERS ATKINS AND MADAFFER ALLOCATE FUNDS TO MAINTAIN POLICE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

On Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, Councilmember Jim Madaffer and I helped add a special flourish to the annual celebration for members of the San Diego Police Department's volunteer programs by donating much-needed funds to keep the programs alive for another year.

Councilmember Madaffer and I donated \$10,000 each from our respective district Community Development Block Grant reserve funds to pay for training for 180 new recruits and long-overdue new uniforms and equipment for the volunteers. The programs were originally scheduled to be cut as part of the on-going trimming in city services to help balance this fiscal year's budget.



Councilmembers Jim Madaffer (left) and Toni Atkins (right) present Acting Police Chief John Welter (second from left) and Lt. Bill Edwards with \$10,000 checks to sustain the police volunteer programs for the coming year. The checks were presented during the annual celebration honoring the police volunteers.

The funds will sustain the Crisis Intervention Teams, Volunteers in Policing, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol.

I allocated these funds because I believe strongly in these programs. They are vital to our neighborhoods and make a difference in our communities. It's important that our police volunteers, who donate countless hours of their personal time to help keep San Diego one of the safest major cities in America, feel like their efforts are valued and appreciated.

## COUNCILMEMBER ATKINS HELPS KEEP 6 TO 6 AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM FREE

When I first received word that the proposed FY04 city budget would include a proposal to institute a user fee for the city's popular "6 to 6" after-school program, my immediate concern was for low-income and working families who might not be able to afford the new fee.

The proposal called for families who don't qualify for free or reduced-price lunches to pay \$90 for their first child, and \$75 for each additional child in the program. The fee was set up to raise approximately \$400,000 annually to help close the city's \$30 million budget gap.

What alarmed me most about this proposal was that some families would have been forced to take their kids out of the program. A family of four that earns \$1 over the \$25,000 threshold takes home approximately \$1,450 a month, so \$90—and \$75 more for each additional child in the program—would be a difficult, if not impossible, expense to absorb after you pay for rent, food and other expenses.

The proposal was scheduled to come before the Council on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Prior to the meeting I was able to meet with City Manager Mike Uberuaga to see if we could find a way to keep the project free for all current users.

Fortunately, by the time the proposal reached the City Council, the concern had been addressed.

We were able to re-direct some of the funds that had been earmarked to expand the program to 800 new users and instead continue to offer the program to all current users for free. The good news is that we'll still be able to expand the program to 400 new students this year.

The 6 to 6 program is currently offered to 25,000 students citywide. The city pays teachers and supervisors to provide 90 minutes of programming before school and three hours after school at 202 middle and elementary schools in the city. There is a waiting list of 20,000 students.

I'm pleased we were able to shift around funds to keep this program free and still expand it to more students. Hopefully, one day we'll be able to provide this program to every student in the city who desires to be a part of it.

### How To Contact Us

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## COUNCILMEMBER ATKINS OPPOSES PARKING METER INCREASE

I couldn't help but vocally oppose the council action taken June 10th, which sought to increase parking meter fees to \$1.30 an hour and lengthen the hours of enforcement to 8pm. I voted against the proposal on the grounds that it created an unfair burden on the few areas of the city which have parking meters, including the District Three communities of Hillcrest and Mid-City, as well as the bordering communities of Mission Hills, Little Italy and Downtown.

The proposal would raise fees on the backs of a few of our older, urban communities. And to make matters worse, the few business districts that would bear the brunt of this increase don't receive any of the increased parking fees back into their community, and that's just not fair.

The proposal, which was approved by a 6-3 vote, sought to raise \$2.5 million annually in increased meter revenue and parking fines to help address the city's pending \$30 million budget deficit for Fiscal Year 2004. The communities that already have meters feel like they have been contributing to the City's budget for decades already. I continued to question why these communities should be the only ones tapped to close this part of the budget gap.

I just don't see how it's equitable to increase the cost of parking in some communities by 30 cents an hour, but not in other parts of the city. I felt, and continue to feel, that something is out of balance in this proposal, and it needs to be addressed.

The action passed by council on June 10th represented the first reading of the new ordinance. At what would have been the second reading on June 24th, the Council heard a revised proposal, which was subsequently adopted on June 30th, which rolled back the hours to 6pm, and reduced the amount of the increase to 25 cents, meaning it will now cost \$1.25 per hour to park at a meter. Fines for expired meters were also increased. Additionally, after one year, the revenue from the meter fee increase will be split with the parking districts in a 55/45 percent ratio, which is how the revenues are currently allocated.

I was unable to support the parking meter fee increase for the reasons stated above. However, I did approve of the increased fine, rolling back the hours of enforcement to the original 8am to 6pm time frame, and the revenue retention plan after one year.

## UPCOMING DISTRICT THREE STREET FAIRS, PARADES AND FESTIVALS

### ***Concerts At Bird Park***

***(presented by the North Park Community Association)***

Free and open to the public, the concerts take place on the grass at Bird Park, located at the corner of Upas Street, Pershing Drive and 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Dates:** Select Saturdays throughout the summer.

**Time:** 6:00 to 8:00pm

**July 5:** Bill Caballero & The Bi-National Mambo Orchestra

**July 19:** Theo & The Zydeco Patrol

**August 2:** Sue Palmer and The Motel Swing Band

**August 16:** Jonny Viau and The Blues All-Stars

**August 30:** Millenium Rock & Roll Band

**Contact:** 619/392-4130, or email

BirdParkConcert@aol.com.

### ***'Summer In The Park' Concert Series***

***(presented by the University Heights Community Development Corporation)***

Free and open to the public, the concerts take place at Trolley Barn Park at Adams Avenue and Florida Street.

**Dates:** Every Friday evening from July 11-August 29.

**Time:** 6:00 to 8:00pm

July 11: Silverado Bluegrass Band

July 18: Tami Thomas (Big Band, Swing & Jive)

July 25: The Boogiemen (Blues/Funk/Swing)

August 1: Celtic Ensemble (Traditional Celtic music)

August 8: Bayou Brothers (Zydeco/Cajon/Mardi Gras)

August 15: Gatos Papacitos (Spanish/Flamenco)

August 22: Sue Palmer (Boogie Woogie and Swing)

August 29: The Mar Dels ('50s, '60s & '70s music)

No alcoholic beverages or glass containers are permitted.

**Contact:** 619/297-3166.

### ***San Diego Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride***

**Rally:** Friday, July 25, 7:30 to 10:30pm

Organ Pavilion, Balboa Park

**Parade:** Saturday, July 26, from 11am to 3pm

In Hillcrest on University Avenue between Normal Street and Sixth Avenue, then south on Sixth to Balboa Drive

**Festival:** Saturday and Sunday, July 26-27

Sat.: Noon to 10:00pm, Sun.: 11:00am to 8:00pm

At Marston Point in Balboa Park

**Contact:** 619/297-7683

### ***CityFest***

***(presented by the Hillcrest Association)***

Sunday, August 10, from 10am to 7:00pm

In Hillcrest, on Fifth Avenue between University Avenue and Upas Street.

**Contact:** 619/299-3330



# Photo Gallery



(above) Councilmember Atkins, Park and Recreation Director Ellen Oppenheim, Mayor Dick Murphy and William Beemer of the Parker Foundation are joined by area children as they celebrate the grand reopening of the Inez Grant Parker Memorial Rose Garden in Balboa Park on June 25th.

(below) Councilmember Atkins joins representatives of San Diego Firefighters Local 145 at a check presentation to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School in City Heights. The firefighters, represented here by a team from Station 14 in nearby North Park, donated \$1,400 to help pay for new uniforms for the girls and boys basketball teams. Joining

Councilmember Atkins and the firefighters are Sister Linda Lutz, the principal at OLSH, and students from grades K thru 7.



(left) Councilmember Atkins takes time out to share the joy of reading with first grade students at Jefferson Elementary School in North Park.



(left) Councilmember Atkins addresses attendees at the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Avenue Traffic Calming Project community meeting in Hillcrest.



Over the past few months, Councilmember Atkins has sponsored special council resolutions honoring a variety of community organizations, activists, cultural institutions and retiring city staff members. Some of those receiving specials days in their honor were (clockwise from left) CDC Small Business Finance, Mary Bush, the Mingei Museum, A. Tri Tran, and Marcia McLatchy.

